



Erasmus Policy Statement

Reference number of the Gál Ferenc University charter is:

2021 1531417-27/02/2021

Erasmus Code is

HU SZEGED04

The Participant Identification Code (PIC) is

949252962

2021

1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The mobility of higher education students and staff ☒

Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices ☒

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities ☐

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees ☐

Partnerships for Innovation ☐

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation: ☐

1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

One of the institution's international strategy is to enhance interfaith dialogue therefore it organizes an international Biblical Conference each year. Though choosing partner institutions largely organizes around the staffs' already existing personal international relations, new so far unknown higher education institutions can be listed among partners in order to reach expected short or long term goals. In both cases the following criteria must be met when a partner is chosen: providing high quality of education, the profile of the partner must be similar to the profile of Gál Ferenc University, recognition, courses offered in foreign languages and the geographical proximity to Hungary. The main objectives include among many others the broadening and enriching of course offer and providing possibility for students who cannot take part in mobility to gain new expertise through attending the incoming guest lecturers' courses. The target groups of the mobility are mainly staff and students specialised in theology, pedagogy and church history bachelor's and master's degree programs/education.

GFU is committed towards the internationalization process, and places great emphasis on the operation of mobility. GFU has extended its partnership network to a great extent in the past three years. Due to our extensive international relationship our students and tutors participating in mobility programmes currently can get close to 60 universities, and this number is growing. We have contracts with European and overseas countries: existing and gradually growing cooperation with South-American universities. Our collaborating partners are determined by the similar disciplines with similar institutional goals and researches, and the quality of education and services. In our partnerships we are intent on providing the participants of the exchange programmes and other joint activities with professional and personal benefit.

Our main goals and targets in international mobility:

1. Expansion of the student, tutor and staff mobility's rate and quality.
2. Improving the quality and increasing the number of multilateral inter-institutional co-operation.
3. Increasing the number of international projects: our aim is to strengthen and increase the number of international co-operation and to review continually their content and quality.
4. More and better cooperation between our institution and different labor-market groups.
5. Innovation development in education and training, and its application in the course of cooperation with our partner institutions.

Recognition of international learning experiences is our important principle. Its arrangement is helped by the credit transfer committees. We place great emphasis on collecting foreign professional training places and keeping in contact with them. Our career centres continuously assist and inform visitors about the opportunities. The variety of hosting institutions is from recognized European university search laboratories to companies with reputation to innovative firms. Our university launches double degree and joint degree programmes both in arts and technical fields, but our main goal is to achieve a higher number of joint training programmes, which will further develop our international presence. Taking part in the Erasmus Programme has many benefits and positive effects, especially in the area of internationalization which is very important for us. Due to the quantitative and qualitative increase in the mobility those students can complete their studies in our institution that are more open to the world, communicate better, and who are tolerant of other cultures. Staying abroad contributes to strengthening their intercultural competences, as well. However, student can benefit from Erasmus not only during their study tours. Knowledge gained during the scholarship period, experience and knowledge are a great help to facilitate employment and career progress in the future. Participation in the Programme is a very good opportunity also for our tutors and researchers as it encourages them to build more international cooperation. At the institutional level we can learn much from each other - from the up to par institutional practices to the latest methods - which learning process also contributes to our development.

By participating in the Programme the improvement of the quality of teaching is underlined, which is ensured by courses offered in foreign languages. Exchange of experiences are also expected, which might include the presentation of the local quality assurance and the partner institution's quality assurance. GFF also educates in the field of social sciences, therefore it is hoped that the cooperations provide possibilities to issue common publications with the outcomes of researches.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

GFU has the quality organizational and management structure necessary for the implementation of the execution of the designated activities and capacity from the preparations to the assessment and dissemination of impacts. The institution is committed to the quality management; we find the human capacities and the sustainable structure of communication and cooperation highly important.

GFU now has ca. 50 ERASMUS partner institutions. We have one of the highest ratios in terms of active partnerships; however we need to overview passive partnerships and cease them as they do not generate any mobilities.

In the meantime we need to raise the number of active partnerships especially in the area of economics, health sciences, educational science and theology, the major areas of research and focus of GFU. We aim to reach the figure of 80 active partners by 2023.

Staff mobility has been a flagship aspect of our ERASMUS program in the past three years. We target at keeping up the quality and dynamics of staff mobility; however we need to improve the implementation and process of student mobility. The increase in the number of students willing to take part in studies abroad has been slow. We have investigated reasons and underlying causes and we have come to the conclusion that there are three major tenets in strengthening student mobilities: 1) teachers' impact on students, 2) returning students' impact on their peers, 3) promoting the program on social media efficiently. As for point 1), we constantly request our teachers to maintain a positive attitude towards international mobility so that they can exert a good influence on students. As for peer impact, we have an ERASMUS event each semester at each faculty with the participation of former ERASMUS students so that they present about their experiences to those skeptical about studying abroad. Finally, we promote ERASMUS on our Facebook and Instagram sites weekly. We share news, articles and visuals related to ERASMUS in order our students become interested in studying abroad.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your

institution?

Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

Looking at its international profile and ambitions, internationalization constitutes an inherent part of GFU's strategy, as we constantly aim at building bridges towards international partners through the internationalization of already existing programs, by increasing the number of courses offered in English and inviting more and more guest lecturers from partner universities.

GFU is committed to establishing high-quality, sustainable, mutually beneficial strategic partnerships. This alliance of partner universities is better suited to develop and implement student and staff mobilities as well as to conduct joint research and set up knowledge communities.

In line with these ambitions, it is also a significant priority

- to facilitate the international involvement and networking of teaching and research staff,
- to stimulate GFU students efficiently to participate in mobility programs,
- to increase the number of international students,
- and to invite foreign lecturers") therefore enabling its students to become familiar with the latest international trends and developments, and to build their own professional network while not leaving their home institution. These relationships go far beyond educational cooperation.
- Continuous training of our administrative staff with the help of Erasmus+ staff training is aimed to contribute to the career development of GFU staff.

The internationalization efforts certainly provide students with a wider perspective, improve their employability and they also provide a supporting and stimulating professional academic environment to the academic staff at GFU

Great importance is attached to it in economic and sustainability sections too. Active participation and involvement in European projects is greatly encouraged at all levels.

Our modernization and internationalization strategy is based on the high quality implementation of Erasmus+ cooperation and the establishment of sustainable cooperations with partner institutions. Within the framework of Erasmus cooperation, the number of mobilities considering both staff and student mobilities, have quadrupled in the past three years. This steep increase has been also due to the fact that from 2017 on a large amount of focus has been cast on internationalization at our institution. This focus will remain strong

We have strong dedication in the wide dissemination of the implementation of good practices which show both students and staff what kind of opportunities they have to participate in ERASMUS mobility.

GFU is committed to involving the widest possible range of students and staff into its international activities. We lay great stress on supporting student and staff mobility, which is why University regularly organises faculty ERASMUS days where students are introduced to mobility opportunities and their advantages. Students find update and detailed information about their possibilities on the homepage of GFU under Erasmus+ menu, while staff finds information on a separate website of GFU for staff members.

The University considers the following tenets very important

- Outgoing students enjoy full recognition of their studies abroad. Students are informed about the method at ERASMUS information days as well as in publications on the website. Students receive a Diploma Supplement, where the completion of studies abroad is indicated in a clear and uniform way.
- GFU places great emphasis and energy to promote the internationalisation among administrative staff. We inform colleagues about staff weeks at partner universities.
- Implemented projects and their results are disseminated by websites, different publications and events

GFU is ready to offer high-quality services for international students and staff to help their integration. We also offer particular support and individual counselling to groups that are under-represented in mobility programs so that they earn international experience.

The selection of mobile participants and the award of grants are conducted in a fair, transparent, coherent and documented way by relying on previously set evaluation criteria.

Students and teachers with special needs are helped with special services including personal counselling to find an appropriate host university; whereas students with lower socio-economy background can apply for additional grants.

Whilst monitoring and evaluating our partnership agreements, we supply opportunities for the development of new programs and further development of the existing ones as well as ensure the sustainability of cooperation.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 Implementation of the new principles

Please explain the measures taken in your institution to respect the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion of students and staff. Describe how your institution ensures full and equitable access to participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to the inclusion of those with fewer opportunities.

The University prevents all forms of discrimination, ensures equal opportunities and equal treatment for all lecturers, researchers, employees and students, and maintains the requirements of equal opportunities and equal treatment in its decisions and measures. All these regulations concern the ERASMUS program in its entirety.

The scope of these non-discriminatory regulations extends to all lecturers, researchers, employees, students of the University, applicants to the University, persons and organizations having any legal relationship with the University.

GFU undertakes to prevent and prevent discrimination, both among teachers and researchers, employees and students. The principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment shall apply to the recruitment, employment, remuneration, definition of training and further training and incentives, relocation and dismissal, as well as to all other matters relating to employment and education. case and case. The University shall prohibit discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, ie gender, race, color, nationality, membership of a national or ethnic minority, mother tongue, disability, state of health, religious or worldview, political or other opinion, family status, maternity (pregnancy) or paternity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social origin, wealth, part-time employment or other employment relationship. The University considers direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, unlawful segregation, retaliation and the instruction given to them to be a violation of equal treatment, therefore the University undertakes to prevent and deter them.

The principle of human dignity: The University respects and values the human values, human dignity, uniqueness and equality of man, and thus of the citizens of the University.

The University gives priority to the principles of cooperation and partnership in employment, and considers their implementation to be the basis of fruitful relations. The University therefore establishes transparent contractual relations.

Social solidarity: The University also enforces the principle of solidarity towards its lecturers, researchers, employees and students, ie it thinks responsibly about the citizens of the University, assists its citizens in the interests of the community and supports the disadvantaged to the best of its ability.

The University wishes to assist disadvantaged persons, support the expansion of their opportunities and the preservation of their positions. To this end, it shall develop positive and equitable measures to promote preference for protected and disadvantaged individuals, provided that preference is based only on legal authority, shall not infringe fundamental rights, shall not confer an absolute advantage and shall not exclude consideration of individual aspects.

The University is committed to the principles of equal opportunities in the workplace and, to this end, takes measures to respect the principles of equal treatment and to promote equal opportunities.

Please explain what measures your institution will put in place to implement the European Student Card Initiative, and promote the use of the programme's Erasmus+ mobile App to students. Please refer to the timeline indicated on the European Student Card Initiative website¹.

GFU fully complies with the purposes and objective of the European Card Initiative: the card will guarantee a secure exchange of student information and allow for seamless transition between higher education institutions. Moreover, the card will give students the chance to access online courses and services provided at other higher education institutions. GFU is aware of the fact that this will not only facilitate virtual mobility and blended learning, but the European Student Card Initiative will also give our and incoming international students a greater choice in the programmes they can follow. We understand the notion that this will allow students to enjoy cultural activities throughout Europe at discounted prices.

We highly appreciate the concept according to which the benefits of the Initiative extend beyond students, by simplifying administrative procedures and reducing administrative burden for higher education institutions, boosting mobility for all.

We are following with interest the developments related to the European Student Card, the Institution plans to introduce it. We will pass on the latest related information to the management of the Institution, the Department of Studies and the SG so that the card system is as widely known as possible and thus can be introduced as soon as possible. The OLS portal is also available from here

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-student-card-initiative_en

I will require students who have won a mobility application to register for the app.

Furthermore we also acknowledge the fact that for our institution it will be easier to conduct online management of the entire mobility process – from student selection to the recognition of ECTS credits. It is also significant that online identification of students is simplified and exchange of student data is secured.

GFU will inform all actors (staff and students) about the opportunities of the Student Card Initiative and we will make sure that all positive aspects are exploited.

Please explain how your institutions will implement and promote environmentally friendly practices in the context of the Erasmus+ programme.

In the course of its activities, Gál Ferenc University places great emphasis on the application of environmentally friendly solutions and sustainable tools, so it also keeps responsible and environmentally conscious behavior in mind within the framework of the Erasmus + program.

Our institution, during the mobility processes, also prefers online administration and contact. Our students and faculty are encouraged to submit their mobility applications electronically and use a paper form only when absolutely necessary. Before, after and during the mobility, communication is almost exclusively electronic. We also communicate with our partner institutions electronically.

Our future goal is to get involved in the "Erasmus without paper" project, during which the registration, administration and coordination of Erasmus + mobility participants would take place exclusively online. The introduction of digital administration could lead to paperless, environmentally friendly administration, reduce administrative burdens for all participants in mobility and leave more energy to improve the quality of processes related to mobility projects.

The introduction of the online Learning Agreement and the promotion of the Erasmus + mobile App would open up further green avenues for our University.

In expanding our international relations, we pay attention to the geographical proximity of the partner institution. Choosing a host institution close to the University's training locations not only reduces the cost of mobility, but shorter trips also result in less environmental impact. In the future, we would like to help our students and teachers participating in the mobility program to organize their trips, so that we would have the direct opportunity to encourage everyone to use environmentally friendly means of transport within a reasonable framework.

GFU focuses heavily on environmentally friendly practices. The sending and receiving institution must make efforts to promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among its participants. They should make use of the opportunities provided by the programme to support sustainable means of travel and reduce the negative impact of mobility on the environment. The HEIs are encouraged to develop their own institutional strategies on sustainability and connect them with the concepts of mobility and internationalisation.

plan Institutional Registration in the Erasmus Dashboard system, thus reducing the amount of paper-based forms related administration.

The Institution is mapping out its digitization opportunities. We are exploring the possibility of developing our own mobility management software. In addition, we map the functions offered by the Neptun study system used by Ferenc Gál University, with special regard to the possibilities provided by the mobility management module. The great advantage of the administration within the Neptun system is that it can handle the application of both lecturers and students.

Please explain how you will promote civic engagement and active citizenship amongst your outgoing and incoming students before, after and during mobility.

GFU is aware of the details of the study entitled Civic engagement Studies such as the Erasmus+ Impact Study have shown that the Programme fosters a positive attitude towards multicultural awareness and a stronger sense of European identity amongst mobile students. Moreover, we have also got acquainted with the ESNsurvey 2019 (on Active Citizenship and Student Exchange in Light of the European Elections) that clearly shows that students with an exchange experience are far more engaged in civil society organisations than the average European youth. GFU is fully aware of the fact that the involvement of students and staff through volunteering and active citizenship ought also to be a significant aspect of the institution's inclusion strategy. GFU is ready to set up a student/staff ambassador scheme that involves incoming/outgoing participants who have been on mobility share their experiences with potential applicants or target groups with fewer opportunities. It will be ascertained that mobility will be endorsed by them and it will be explained how impediments to mobility can be overcome under the Programme. GFU will organise or promote activities/projects that enhance the active citizenship skills and competences of our students and staff, for instance the Erasmus Student Network's Social Erasmus Project. We understand that this project aims to better integrate international exchange students in the local society by organising volunteer opportunities to ensure an exchange of values.

2.2 When participating in Mobility Activities - After mobility

Please demonstrate your commitment to implement full automatic recognition in your Higher Education Institution.

Please describe the concrete steps you will take to ensure the full automatic recognition of all credits gained for learning outcomes achieved during a mobility period abroad/ a blended mobility, according to the Council Recommendation on Automatic Mutual Recognition².

GFU acknowledges the following: the importance of fostering transparency and building trust in each other's higher education systems to achieve automatic mutual recognition for the purpose of further learning, agree on fulfilling the following conditions, in which: a) national qualifications frameworks or systems are referenced to the European Qualifications Framework, with the referencing reviewed and updated when relevant, and self-certified to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area; b) our higher education systems are organised in line with Bologna Process structures and principles, comprising a three-cycle framework and, where applicable to the Member State, a short cycle as defined in the qualification framework of the European Higher Education Area; and c) external quality assurance is carried out by independent quality assurance agencies registered with the European Quality Assurance Register and which thus operate in line with both the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. 3. In cooperation with National Academic Recognition Information Centres, higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies and other key stakeholders, develop national guidance to support higher education institutions.

We pay a considerable amount of attention to keep an up-to-date Course Catalogue, with descriptions of degree programmes, single educational units and grade distribution tables. We will provide Diploma Supplements for all graduates, issued automatically and free of charge in a widely used language and, where possible, in digital format; and we will maintain a set of transparent criteria for recognition that are applied throughout each higher education institution.

Please describe your institution's measures to support, promote and recognise staff mobility:

GFU ensures that their mobile staff and students are sufficiently prepared for their mobility periods, including when it comes to the new blended mobility format. This includes preparation for the differences between GFU and the partner HEIs. We make sure that it will be made transparent that our students and staff need to be prepared for the differences between Hungary and the receiving countries. In the form of ERASMUS preparation sessions we will prepare our students and staff for cultural and linguistic challenges which will be encountered during mobility. We will place particular emphasis on the development of global citizenship skills. This preparation will take the form of ERASMUS sessions organized for our outgoing staff and students. An online archive with feedback from former mobility participants will be implemented along with an up-to-date series of news on social networking. We will also be encouraging the participation of alumni in offering support through a variety of activities. We will be promoting and supporting student organisations who organise projects and activities in this regard, especially the Erasmus Student Network. We will be endorsing and encouraging our students to identify their skills prior to mobility and follow-up their development during and after the mobility period, in order to better understand the added value of mobility on improving intercultural skills. We understand that language preparation is a crucial element to ensure success in mobility outcomes, that is why we provide language courses for both staff and students in both semesters of each academic year.

In our IIAs we have always agreed and will continue to do so on the proficiency level required in the language of instruction and the local language that the participant should have at the start of the mobility. The proficiency level is defined in the course catalogue in the IIAs.

Our outgoing staff have the minimum required proficiency level of English, which is an important piece of criteria at the selection process. Student selection criteria always have taken and will pursue to take into account both the relevant language skills at the selection stage and the capacity of the students to improve their language skills to achieve the required minimum level at the start of the mobility abroad. In order to do so, we offer English as a foreign language classes for our student.

Besides our language courses provided for students and staff, we are aware of the fact that the Erasmus+ Programme provides the language assessment and support offered by the European Commission, so that our participants can better prepare for and make the most out of their period abroad. We always make sure our students take part in the OLS assessment and if designated to, will participate in online classes.

2.3 For the Purposes of Visibility

² The text of the Council Recommendation on Automatic Mutual Recognition may be found at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1568891859235&uri=CELEX:32018H1210\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1568891859235&uri=CELEX:32018H1210(01))

Please provide the web link where you will host the Erasmus Policy statement in the future. Please reflect on how you plan to regularly promote the activities supported by the Programme.

<http://gfe.hu/erasmus>

The text of the Charter should be easily accessible to both students and lecturers, therefore - in accordance with the regulations - the Erasmus Policy Statement will be placed on the official website of Ferenc Gál University, in an easy-to-find place, under the Erasmus menu. The text of the Erasmus Policy Statement is also published in Hungarian and English, so that foreign students, lecturers and guests visiting the University can get acquainted with its contents.

We keep our teachers and staff informed of the latest developments in the Erasmus program, both because they are themselves participants in the mobility program and because they are the most effective way to reach our students. With this interdependent information network, we can make the ECHE principles accessible to all participants in mobility.


Some of the principles formulated in this application are already included in the own internal regulations and management instructions of Gál Ferenc University. For example, participation in the mobility program is part of the academic advancement of our instructors. Management instructions stipulate that in the case of student mobility, prior to departure, we always agree on the admissibility of the credits to be completed at the host institution, thus ensuring maximum credit recognition. The same instruction prescribes the procedure for submitting applications, which favors electronic administration.

The mission statement of Gál Ferenc University places great emphasis on the importance of active citizenship. In addition to enriching knowledge, expanding and deepening professional knowledge, our University is also ready to offer the experience of spiritual enrichment to all its students. Christian values, which are also expressed in the mission of the University, are present in education, administration that supports studies, and student services. Diocesan social institutions and child and youth protection institutions in the five counties provide opportunities for our students to prepare for their chosen profession, to be actively involved in health, social and other support activities, such as homeless and elderly care, family support and childcare.

GFU makes adequate arrangements to ensure that project dissemination takes place from the very beginning of the project activities. GFU makes ample space available on the GFU website. Any instance of mobilities is always published on the website of GFU and on all social media platforms. The clear dissemination policy of GFU is that every week at least one article is published on the mentioned platforms about ERASMUS mobilities, news and calls. The institutional webpage has an easily accessible page where anybody can access the outcomes already achieved in all the projects the institution has been part of (gff-szeged.hu/international). This always includes clear mention of the staff participating in the project. GFU endeavors to regularly contribute to the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform throughout the project lifecycle, as well as at the finalisation stage.

Please describe how you will ensure that the principles of this Charter will be well communicated and applied by staff at all levels of the institution.

As the ECHE Guidelines are based on the good practice of various institutions in Europe, the staff responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme and internationalisation strategy within GFU always consult and follow them. Besides finding our own solutions for any problems that might arise, we preserve the common framework suggested by the Guidelines in order to reach the best possible implementation of institutional and Programme goals, as well understanding and compatibility across Europe. The ECHE Self-Assessment Tool is used by GFU within the institution on all levels, to achieve better awareness of the Programme's aims and objectives, and its impact on the development of internationalisation within the institution. In addition, the ECHE Self-Assessment Tool will be used by GFU as a benchmark to set short and long-term goals and whenever new Programme activities are introduced within the institution.

Date	Signature of the Legal Representative	Stamp
06/05/2021	 Dr. Gábor Kozma, rector	